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IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Original) A system for use with implantable cardiac stimulation devices comprising:

a plurality of programmers operative to program operations of implantable cardiac stimulation devices and to process information received from implantable cardiac stimulation devices; and

a programmer backup system coupled to the plurality of programmers and operative to backup and synchronize information used by the programmers.

2. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the programmer backup system synchronizes information used by the programmers by receiving information from the programmers, automatically merging the received information from the programmers, and selectively transmitting the merged information to the programmers for use therein.

3. (Original) The system of claim 2 wherein the programmer backup system is operative to transmit the merged information either periodically, on-demand, or substantially continuously.

4. (Original) The system of claim 2 wherein the programmer backup system is operative to detect any inconsistent information received from the programmers that cannot be merged automatically.

5. (Original) The system of claim 1 further comprising a browser system connected to the backup system through the Internet and operative to display and modify information stored within the backup system.

6. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein at least one of the programmers is operative to display and modify information stored within the backup system.

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7. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the plurality of programmers are classified into one or more groups and wherein the programmer backup system is operative to synchronize information only among programmers within a particular group.

8. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the information to be synchronized is classified into one or more types of information and wherein the programmer backup system is operative to synchronize only selected types of information stored within the programmers.

9. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the programmer backup system is operative to backup and synchronize one or more of programmer software data, programmer setup and configuration data, physician preferences for setup and configuration data, programming parameters, patient personal data, implantable device diagnostic data, and patient diagnostic data stored within the programmers.

10. (Original) The system of claim 9 wherein the programmer software data comprises programmer software for controlling the programmers.

11. (Original) The system of claim 9 wherein the programmer setup and configuration data comprises data for controlling the operation of the programmer software.

12. (Original) The system of claim 9 wherein the patient personal data comprises patient medical histories and patient contact information.

13. (Original) The system of claim 9 wherein the implantable device diagnostic data comprises device diagnostic information transferred from one of the implantable cardiac stimulation devices to a programmer pertaining to the operation of the implantable cardiac stimulation device.

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14. (Original) The system of claim 9 wherein the patient diagnostic data comprises patient diagnostic information transferred from one of the implantable cardiac stimulation devices to a programmer pertaining to the patient.

15-27. (Cancelled)

28. (Original) A system for use with implantable cardiac stimulation devices, the system comprising a plurality of programmers that are adapted for communication with the implantable cardiac stimulation devices, and a central system that is in communication with the respective programmers, the central system being operative to receive data from multiple programmers and to process the data to create a set of merged data for use by the programmers.

29. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein the central system is operative to transmit the set of merged data to each programmer.

30. (Original) The system of claim 29, wherein the central system is operative to continuously transmit the set of merged data to each programmer.

31. (Original) The system of claim 29, wherein the central system is operative to periodically transmit the set of merged data to each programmer.

32. (Original) The system of claim 29, wherein the central system is operative to transmit the set of merged data to each programmer on demand.

33. (Original) The system of claim 28 wherein the central system is operative to synchronize information used by the programmers by receiving information from the programmers, automatically merging the received information from the programmers, and selectively transmitting the merged information to the programmers for use therein.

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34. (Original) The system of claim 28 wherein the central system is operative to transmit the merged information either periodically, on-demand, or substantially continuously.

35. (Original) The system of claim 28 wherein the central system is operative to detect any inconsistent information received from the programmers that cannot be merged automatically.

36. (Original) The system of claim 33 wherein the plurality of programmers are classified into one or more groups and wherein the central system is operative to synchronize information only among programmers within a particular group.

37. (Original) The system of claim 33 wherein the information to be synchronized is classified into one or more types of information and wherein the central system is operative to synchronize only selected types of information stored within the programmers.

38. (New) The system of claim 1 wherein the programmer backup system comprises:

- means for receiving information from the programmers;
- means for backing up the information received from the programmers;
- means for synchronizing the information received from the programmers;
- and
- means for selectively transmitting synchronized information to the programmers.

39. (New) The system of claim 38 wherein the means for synchronizing information received from the programmers operates to automatically merge information received from different programmers, with the information merged so that recent information supercedes older information.

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40. (New) The system of claim 39 wherein the means for synchronizing information detects any inconsistent information received from the programmers that cannot be merged automatically.

41. (New) The system of claim 39 further comprising browser means, connected to the backup system through the Internet, for displaying and modifying information stored within the means for storing of the means for synchronizing information.

42. (New) The system of claim 39 wherein the plurality of programmers are classified into one or more groups and wherein the means for synchronizing operates to synchronize information only among programmers within a particular group.

43. (New) The system of claim 39 wherein the information to be synchronized is classified into one or more types of information and wherein the means for synchronizing operates to synchronize only selected types of information stored within the programmers.

44. (New) The system of claim 39 wherein the means for synchronizing operates to synchronize one or more of programmer software data, programmer setup and configuration data, physician preferences for setup and configuration data, programming parameters, patient personal data, implantable device diagnostic data, and patient diagnostic data stored within the programmers.

45. (New) The system of claim 39 wherein the means for synchronizing operates to synchronize information periodically, on-demand, or substantially continuously.